

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SENATOR PERCY REQUESTS COPIES BE PASSED TO DR KISSINGER
AND TO SCOTT COHEN, SENATOR'S OFFICE.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US, OREP

SUBJ: SENATOR PERCY'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI

BEGIN SUMMARY: SENATOR PERCY MET WITH MRS GANDHI ON AUGUST 21.
SHE WAS CORDIAL, BUT IN A PESSIMISTIC MOOD ABOUT THE PRISONER OF WAR
ISSUE, PAKISTANI AND IRANIAN ARMS, AND DOMESTIC POLITICA PROBLEMS.
IN DISCUSSING THE COMING BREZHNEV VISIT TO NEW DELHI, SHE MENTIONED
NO DATES AND SEEMED TO DOWNPLAY ITS IMPORTANCE BY SAYING IT HAD
BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR TWO YEARS. THE SENATOR TOOK ISSUE
WITH HER COMMENTS IN CANADA ABOUT US AID GOING MAINLY TO THE
PRIVATE SECTOR, TO WHICH SHE REPLIED SHE HAD BEEN TALKING OF
EARLY AID AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BOKARO STEEL MILL PROJECT.
END SUMMARY

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1. SENATOR PERCY AND HIS FAMILY HAD TEA WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI ON AUGUST 21. DURING THE DISCUSSION THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE COVERED:

2. PRISONERS OF WAR: MRS GANDHI WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TO RETURN POWS. SHE THOUGHT BHUTTO DID NOT REALLY WANT TO SETTLE THE ISSUE. "HE DOES NOT WANT TO HAVE 70,000 MILITARY PRISONERS OF WAR ON HIS HANDS." SENATOR PERCY SAID BHUTTO HAD GIVEN HIM THE OPPOSITE IMPRESSION, AND HAD EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE FRUITFUL. SHE NOTED THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR MEETING SHE WOULD BE RECEIVING THE PAKISTANI NEGOTIATOR, AZIZ AHMED, AND WOULD BE DISCUSSING POSSIBLE EXCHANGES OF PRISONERS AND OTHERS.

3. RELATIONS WITH THE US: MRS GANDHI SAID SHE WELCOMED THE APPOINTMENT OF DR MOYNIHAN AS AMBASSADOR, AND INDICATED THAT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE IN IMPROVING RELATIONS. SHE CITED THE RUPEE NEGOTIATIONS AS AN EXAMPLE. THE SENATOR EXPRESSED HIS OPINION THAT CONGRESS WOULD TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE SETTLEMENT ONCE IT WAS NEGOTIATED, BUT WOULD SUPPORT AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION. MRS GANDHI SAID SHE THOUGHT THE ISSUE OF RENEWING EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD BEEN RESOLVED, BUT THE SENATOR DIFFERED WITH HER. SHE SEEMED TO AGREE THAT IT SHOULD BE. THE SENATOR TOOK ISSUE WITH HER COMMENT IN A VANCOUVER SPEECH TO THE EFFECT THAT US ECONOMIC AID HAD BEEN LESS EFFECTIVE THAN COMMUNIST AID BECAUSE IT HAD GONE TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR. HE SAID SOME 80 PERCENT OF ALL US AID HAD ACTUALLY GONE TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR. SHE REIMFFC THAT SHE HAD REFERRED TO EARLY US AID, AND HER COMMENT SHOULD BE INTERPRETED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BOKARO STEEL MILL PROJECT.

4. ARMS FOR PAKISTAN AND IRAN: SHE SAID ARMS TO PAKISTAN WAS AN "INFLAMMATORY" SUBJECT, BOTH ARMS FROM THE US AND POSSIBLY FROM IRAN. THE SENATOR NOTED SPECIFIC US PROHIBITIONS ON THE TRANSFER OF ARMS SUPPLIED TO IRAN, AND SAID OUR POLICY WAS NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ARMS RACE IN SOUTH ASIA. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD MR BHUTTO THAT THE SUPPLY OF US ARMS TO PAKISTAN WOULD NOT CHANGE THE BALANCE OF FORCES, BECAUSE THE SOVIETS WOULD BE PRESSURED TO SEND MORE ARMS TO INDIA.

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5. BANGLADESH: SENATOR PERCY SAID HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PRESSURE FOR WAR CRIME TRIALS IN BANGLADESH WAS LESSENING. THE RECOGNITION ISSUE CAME UP, AND MRS GANDHI SAID IT WAS NO LONGER IMPORTANT WHEN PAKISTAN RECOGNIZED BANGLADESH BECAUSE SO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES HAD ALREADY DONE SO.

6. RELATIONS WITH CHINA: MRS GANDHI WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA. SHE COMPLAINED

ABOUT NAGAS, TRAINED BY THE CHINESE, INFILTRATING THE EASTERN BORDER, AND ABOUT THE INTRANSIGENT NAGA ATTITUDE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOI. SHE REITERATED THAT THE CHINESE HAD TOLD INDIA RESUMPTION OF MORE NORMAL RELATIONS WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT RESOLUTION OF THE PAK POW PROBLEM.

7. THE BREZHNEV VISIT: BREZHNEV WOULD COME TO NEW DELHI SOME TIME THIS YEAR, SHE SAID, AFTER THE HOT SUMMER WAS OVER. THE INVITATION HAD BEEN EXTENDED AT THE TIME THE FREIDNSHIP TREATY WAS SIGNED TWO YEARS AGO. SHE SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT THERE WAS NO URGENCY FOR THE VISIT AS FAR AS INDIA WAS CONCERNED.

8. THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION: MRS GANDHI SEEMED TO TAKE PERSONALLY THE ACTIVITY OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET BY ALLEGED RUMORS THAT SHE WAS IN POOR HEALTH AND EVEN "DYING OF CANCER". SHE COMMENTED ON THE FOOD SHORTAGE AND INFLATION WITHOUT INDICATING WHAT SHE PLANNED TO DO ABOUT SUCH PROBLEMS.

9. COMMENT: THE ABOVE ACCOUNT IS BASED ON SENATOR PERCY'S NOTES DICTATED FOLLOWING THE MEETING. FULL TEXT BEING POUCHED. AS WOULD BE EXPECTED, THE SENATOR DID HIS VERY BEST TO EXPLAIN AMERICAN CONCERS AND TO HOLD UP OUR END OF THINGS.
MOYNIHAN

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